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Governance of the Association

The Board of Directors of the AAAS has established a Committee on Governance (1) and directed it to "propose a revision of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association to facilitate the expansion of the Association's program and membership and to improve the responsiveness of the Association's programs and procedures to the membership." The urgent need for this change reflects not only a more active involvement of the members in all affairs of the Association and explicit criticism of some of the current election procedures, but also a worldwide democratization of all human institutions—be they churches, universities, or professional societies.

The basic provisions of the present Constitution and Bylaws were approved in 1952 after a reassessment of the functions of the Association during the Arden House Conference called by Warren Weaver in 1951. The Arden House report (2) urged "the cultivation of synthesizing and unifying activities as the main emphasis of the AAAS in its internal work," and "to improve public understanding of science as the main external emphasis." The report of the conference strongly reaffirmed the objectives as revised in 1946. The present Committee is not inclined to change these.

The Committee on Governance consulted with the Committee on Council Affairs and the Board of Directors and, in December 1970, reported its plans and time schedule to the Council at the Chicago meeting. Two principles appeared to the Committee to be overriding for the years ahead. First, the AAAS must be a democratic organization in which members have a direct role, through elections, for determining who shall conduct the affairs of the Association on their behalf. Second, the Committee senses a decided trend over the last quarter century to markedly increase the role of the Association in advancing, through public understanding, the use of science for the promotion of human welfare.

The first major problem to which the Committee is seeking a solution involves membership and elections. Who shall be eligible for membership? Shall there be any differentiation among members for the purpose of governance? How shall principal officers of the Association be nominated and elected?

A second area of concern is the organization and management of the AAAS. The present Council has a membership of 540, the majority selected as representatives of affiliated societies. A poll of Council members in 1968 favored a reduction in size to between 100 and 200 members. It is urgent that we create a Council of workable size, which is selected by and directly responsible to the 133,000 members of the Association instead of predominantly to the organizations affiliated with AAAS. Such a Council could better serve as the primary legislative body of the Association, with the Board of Directors providing, as at present, the essential executive and management function.

Through this editorial the Committee earnestly solicits observations and suggestions from all members of the Association (3). A draft report from the Committee will be circulated to Council members for comment early in the fall. It is the Committee's hope that changes in the Constitution can be approved by the Council at the 1971 annual meeting in Philadelphia.—LEONARD M. RIESER, *Chairman, Committee on Governance*, and *Provost, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire*

1. The Committee consists of three members from the Committee on Council Affairs: Merrill M. Flood, Lorrin A. Riggs, and Frank Bradshaw Wood; three members of the Board of Directors: David Blackwell, Leonard M. Rieser, and Kenneth V. Thimann; and a representative from the Youth Council: Mack Lipkin, Jr.
2. W. Weaver, *Science* 114, 472 (1951).
3. Communications should be addressed to the Executive Officer, AAAS, 1515 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005.